

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 758.

SATURDAY, JULY 6, 1878.

PRICE 1¹/₂d.

GEORGE MOORE.

A FEW years ago, George Moore was noted as one of the merchant princes of London, a man of great wealth and benevolence, who had a hand in the principal charities in the metropolis. The story of his life has been told by Dr Smiles in a ponderous volume, likely to be seen by only a few of our readers; for which and other reasons we present the following condensed sketch, along with such critical remarks as seem to be called for.

George Moore was born in 1806, one of five children of a Cumberland statesman—that is, proprietor of a small piece of land which he hereditarily cultivated as a means of livelihood for his family. All worked, the men at ploughing or management of cattle, the women at milking cows, making butter and cheese, or in affairs of the household. It was a primitive state of things; but in a plain way there was no want of food, though the comforts enjoyed were little better than those of a hired labourer. With no wish to change, the Moores had lived at the paternal estate of Overgates for more than three hundred years. Like other youngsters, George got a little schooling, with a proportionate amount of ill-usage from his teachers, as was then customary. Disliking the prospect of never rising beyond the sphere of those about him, he became an apprentice to a draper named Messenger, in the Cumberland town of Wigton; and with a fortitude that did him credit, he determined to quit Wigton as soon as his apprenticeship was at an end, and make his way to London. This he did at the appointed time. Proceeding in the first place to Carlisle, he put up for a night at the Gray Goat Inn; and next morning, at five o'clock, he started on the outside of the stage-coach for London.

At present, the journey from Carlisle to London by railway is a matter of seven hours. George Moore was, by coach, two days and two nights on the road, the suffering, as we may suppose, being considerable. He arrived much fatigued in London on Good-Friday 1825. Next day, having got accommodation in a lodging-house 'kept by a

neighbourly body from the north,' he set forth to look for a situation. Of all places in the world, London, with its vast multitudes of people, is the most cheerless for a stranger who is totally unknown, and has little means at his disposal. George went along the streets, looking for drapers' shops, and trying one after the other, without avail. There was 'no vacancy.' He was in despair, and thought he should emigrate to America. On calling at Swan and Edgar's, in Piccadilly, he told a young man named Wood of his intentions. Wood advised him to call on Mr Ray, of Flint, Ray, and Co., Soho Square, for Ray was a Cumberland man, and had been asking for him. At once he went off to see Mr Ray, who out of pity engaged him at a salary of thirty pounds a year. Here, then, as a junior assistant, he was planted in a large retail drapery concern in the metropolis. He had fortunately got his foot on the lowest step of the ladder, and it would be his own blame if he did not climb to the top.

Having obtained a situation in a house of business, George says in one of his speeches late in life: 'I soon found that coming green from the country, I laboured under many disadvantages. Compared with the young men with whom I was associated, I found my education very deficient. The first thing I did to remedy my defects was to put myself to school at night, after the hours of employment were over; and many an hour have I borrowed from sleep in order to employ it in the improvement of my mind. At the end of eighteen months I had acquired a considerable addition to my previous knowledge, and felt myself able to take my stand side by side with my competitors. Let no one rely in such cases on what is termed Luck. Depend upon it, that the only luck is merit, and that no young man will make his way unless he possesses knowledge, and exerts all his powers in the accomplishment of his objects.' While pushing forward in his daily duties, he one day saw a bright little girl come tripping into the warehouse, whom he learned to be Eliza Ray, a daughter of one of his employers. From that moment he resolved to do all in his power, by diligence in his calling, to win

that young creature as his wife. The idea took possession of his mind, and beneficially influenced his conduct. In a short time he took a dislike to retail dealing, and procured a situation, at a salary of forty pounds a year, in a wholesale concern, that of Fisher, Stroud, and Robinson, Watling Street, then the first lace-house in the City.

In this new line of duty, there was much greater scope for his skill in effecting sales. To perfect himself as an accountant he continued to work hard at the evening school. By the efforts he made, he gained the respect of everybody in the firm. He was attentive, careful, accurate, hard-working. At the end of a year he was promoted to be town traveller, in which capacity he distanced all competitors, and sold more goods than any traveller had done before. He was, in fact, found to be too good for town travelling, and was despatched on the Liverpool and Manchester circuit. In his visits to dealers in the northern towns, he soon established a large business. The rapid way in which he finished off town after town was truly astonishing. He did not dawdle about, as was once the common practice. He never lost a moment. Somewhere or other, he was at work from morning till night. Among commercial travellers he began to be spoken of as the Napoleon of Watling Street. Sent off to Ireland to beat up for orders, he there acquitted himself in a manner equally satisfactory. While in Ireland, he met Mr Groucock, member of a rival lace firm, who spoke of returning to London and taking Lancashire in his route. The hint was enough. George hastened to England, and had done the Lancashire towns before Groucock made his appearance. Groucock saw it was no use contending with such a man. He must buy him up. He offered a salary of five hundred a year. It was very tempting, as all that George was still getting was one hundred and fifty pounds. The offer, however, was declined. The only inducement to leave Fisher would be a partnership. In self-defence, Groucock yielded to the terms; and in 1830, 'at the age of twenty-three, George Moore entered as a partner into the firm of Groucock and Copestake, long afterwards known as Groucock, Copestake, and Moore.'

The firm of which he became a member had begun in a small way, and had still a limited business. Moore put life into it; and soon vastly extended its operations. Flying from town to town, he worked sixteen hours a day, everywhere making himself popular in the trade. For ten years he never took a holiday, so greatly was his heart in his work. Many stories are recorded of his determination to get orders. 'On one occasion, he sold his clothes off his back to get an order. A tenacious draper in a Lancashire town refused to deal with him. The draper was quite satisfied with the firm that supplied him, and he would make no change. This became known amongst the commercial travellers at the hotel, and one of

them made a bet of five pounds with George Moore that he would not obtain an order. George set out again. The draper saw him entering the shop, and cried out: "All full! all full, Mr Moore! I told you so before!" "Never mind," said George; "you won't object to a crack?" "O no!" said the draper. They cracked about many things; and then George Moore, calling the draper's attention to a new coat which he wore, asked what he thought of it. "It's a capital coat," said the draper. "Yes, first-rate; made in the best style by a first-rate London tailor." The draper looked at it again, and again admired it. "Why," said George, "you are exactly my size; it's quite new; I'll sell it to you." "What's the price?" "Twenty-five shillings." "What? That's very cheap." "Yes; it's a great bargain." "Then I'll buy it," said the draper. George went back to his hotel, donned another suit, and sent the "great bargain" to the draper. George calling again, the draper offered to pay him. "No, no," said George; "I'll book it: you've opened an account." Mr Moore had sold the coat at a loss, but he was recouped by the five-pound bet which he won, and he obtained an order besides. The draper afterwards became one of his best customers.'

On another occasion, a draper at Newcastle-on-Tyne was called upon many times without securing an order. Moore discovered that he was fond of a particular kind of snuff—rappee with a touch of beggar's brown in it. Providing himself with a box of this kind of snuff, he offered a pinch to the draper next time he called. The draper 'took a pinch with zest, and said that it was very fine. George had him now. He said: "Let me present you with the box; I have plenty more." The draper accepted the box. No order was asked; but the next time George called on him, he got his first order, and the draper long continued to be one of his best customers.'

There is a drollery in these anecdotes; but they reveal a degree of cunning and trickery far from pleasing. If business can be done only by such craftiness of procedure, it should not be done at all. Unscrupulous as it would appear in wheeling drapers to give him orders for goods, and restless in his energy, George Moore so much increased the business of the firm—consequently benefiting himself—that he thought he might with propriety make his long pent-up feelings known to Miss Ray. She refused him. Five years passed, and he tried again. This time his offer was accepted. The pair were married in 1840, and they took up house in a modest style befitting their means. Business continued to increase. The premises of the firm in Bow Churchyard were enlarged. More assistants were employed. Everything was prosperous. To superintend affairs, Moore gave up travelling. This proved a bad arrangement. During his journeys he had plenty of exercise and breathed pure air. Now he sat at a desk in a stuffy warehouse, and as a natural

result his health gave way. What signified his cleverness and his growing wealth, if he could not sleep at night, had no appetite, and was in a fair way of dying from disregard of the laws which govern human existence? His case was exactly that of thousands of keen men in business in London, a large number of whom drop off between forty and fifty years of age, through pure want of knowing how to live properly. By a doctor's advice, George Moore burst away for a time from business. He went to the country, and took to horse-exercise, galloping over the downs at Brighton in company with a party of fox-hunters. At first he had some falls, but these he did not mind. He became a bold rider. His health was improved by the open-air exercise and freedom from tasking brain-work. To effect a complete recovery he took a voyage to the United States in 1844. With all that he saw in America he was much pleased, and he says so in his autobiographic notes.

Returning to London, Mr Moore resumed business with his accustomed eagerness, but taking some exercise in hunting to keep himself in good health. He now began to feel an interest in benevolent institutions, and to become a director in several of them. One for which he exerted himself considerably was an establishment for maintaining and educating the children of Commercial Travellers. A trait in Moore's character which peculiarly commends itself to our approbation, was the kindness he shewed to old friends who had been unfortunate in their career. 'His old master, Messenger, for whom, notwithstanding his failings, he had a great respect, failed in business after his apprentice had left for London. His breakdown was one of the numerous instances of the effects of drink. Messenger came up to London, where he obtained a situation. Then his health failed, and he was obliged to give up work. He applied to George Moore, who maintained him while he lived, and paid his funeral expenses at his death.' Others in a like manner he helped in time of need. In occasional visits to old haunts in Cumberland, his benevolence was peculiarly conspicuous. He established schools where they were needed, gave prizes, addressed the children, and treated them to tea and sports after the examinations. Education being still in a sleepy condition in Cumberland, he may be said to have wakened it up; and here beyond doubt he did substantial good. The operation of the recent and much-needed School Act will, we presume, have superseded any necessity for efforts of this kind.

A man who has been successful in his enterprises, stands a fair chance of being sought after to take his part in public affairs. George Moore had attained to such a good position that a kind of run was made to place him in all sorts of responsible offices. In 1852, the Lord Mayor designated him as Sheriff; but he declined the offer, and paid the penalty of four hundred pounds. More honours were offered to him. Two of the

wards in London elected him an alderman, and he refused to serve in both cases. He had at least six offers of being elected a member of parliament. All were firmly declined. He had made up his mind to devote all his spare time in connection with public charities. Every one, of course, is entitled to decide how he shall employ his leisure time according to his own particular fancies; it is obvious, however, that when properly called on, a man is bound, if he can, to take his share in the public administration. In his resolution to refuse office, George Moore did not, as we think, shew a correct sense of duty.

With a largely extended and well organised business, Mr Moore found himself able, in 1854, to afford to reside in a superbly furnished mansion in Kensington Palace Gardens. After this, he kept a good deal of company, of whom there is never any lack where there is a profuse hospitality. A large dinner was given weekly. In a short time, his wife reckoned that above eight hundred persons had dined with them. This kind of life did not prove satisfactory. It did not afford lasting pleasure, as how could it? Giving up this dinnering system, he devoted himself still more intently to the metropolitan charities, such as ragged schools, city missions, free hospitals, reformatories, and refuges, on all which he spent large sums of money. His mind also became strongly affected with religious impressions, accompanied with that sense of the worthlessness of mere wealth which creeps over men who through long years have been engrossed, with little intermission, in the successful acquisition of riches. Besides copiously giving from his own means, he did not grudge the trouble of begging money from neighbours on behalf of some charity or other. 'With his friends he was often very abrupt. When he entered their offices they knew what he was about. "What is it now, Mr Moore?" "Well, I am on a begging expedition!" "Oh, I know that very well. What is it?" "It's for the Royal Free Hospital—a hospital free to all, without any letters of recommendation. I want twenty guineas." "It's a large sum." "Well, it's the sum I have set down for you to give. You must help me. Look sharp!" The cheque was got, and away he started on a fresh expedition.'

Learning, through the agency of missionaries, that large numbers among the poorer classes in the metropolis who had families were living unmarried, in consequence, as was alleged, of inability to pay the marriage fees, Mr Moore volunteered to remove the difficulty, by paying the fees out of his own pocket. His contributions first and last for this purpose amounted to upwards of five hundred pounds. In the midst of his various benevolently meant efforts, he had the misfortune to lose his wife. She died in 1858, and was much lamented. His old malady, sleeplessness, came back, and for relief he tried the effects of a journey to Italy. He likewise, as a

solacement, purchased an estate in Cumberland, situated near the place of his birth, and took much interest in restoring and beautifying the old Border tower of Whitehall on the property. He had now two dwellings—a splendid mansion in London, and a species of ancient castle in the country. Both were solitary, without a companion, for which reason he looked about for a wife; and one in all respects suitable fell in his way, the daughter of a gentleman in Westmoreland. They were married in 1861. Established as a country gentleman in Cumberland, he was received with marked respect by the resident nobility and gentry. He hunted with them, dined with them, and plunged into innumerable schemes of local improvement. The higher clergy hailed him as a precious benefactor in all laudable undertakings.

Back at times to London, he went on as before among his numerous charities. Whatever he set his face to, he went at it with an almost unexampled earnestness of purpose. His money appeared to him to be only a gift wherewith to do good. A church and school were wanted for Somers Town, a poor district in the metropolis. 'Mr Moore spent fifteen thousand pounds on the buildings, and also subscribed two hundred and fifty pounds a year to carry on the parish work necessary in so poor and miserable a locality.' On being complimented by the present Archbishop of Canterbury on his beneficence, he said 'he did not wish to claim any credit for building the church; and if anybody owed any gratitude to God, he was the man.'

At the consecration of the church at Somers Town, Mr Moore appeared with his arm in a sling. He had met with an accident when out hunting which caused intense pain in the shoulder. Dr Smiles relates the ineffectual efforts at cure by the first physicians in London. One of them said 'it was a most painful affection of the shoulder-joint' Moore knew that already; but the physicians and the surgeons could do nothing for him. At length, when he could bear the pain no longer, and found he could get no relief from regular practitioners, he was persuaded by his friends to try a bone-setter named Hutton. Having first had the shoulder rubbed with hot neats-foot oil, 'Hutton took the arm in his hand, gave it two or three turns, and then gave it a tremendous twist round in the socket. The shoulder-joint was got in. George Moore threw out his arm with strength, straight before him, and said, "I could fight;" whereas a moment before he could not raise it two inches. It had been out for nearly two years!' Why bone-setters should so adroitly do what regularly instructed surgeons occasionally fail to perform, or even to understand, is somewhat incomprehensible. The public would like some explanations on the subject.

An interesting event in the life of George Moore was his appointment as one of the Commissioners from London to distribute relief in food and money to the starving population of Paris, on the termination of the Franco-German war in 1871. From the state of the roads—torn-up rails, broken-down bridges, and general disorder—there was much difficulty in getting supplies to Paris; and on arrival at the barriers there was the further difficulty of procuring means of conveyance into the city, for fifty thousand horses had been eaten, and few remained available for work.

At length, the food was ready for distribution at the business agency of Mr Moore's firm in the Place des Petits Pères, and what a scene ensued!

'Never,' says George Moore, 'did I see such an assembly of hollow, lean, hungry faces—such a shrunken, famine-stricken, diseased-looking crowd. They were very quiet. They seemed utterly crushed and hopeless. It is now ten days since the armistice began, and yet there is no food in Paris except what we have brought. There is still the black bread made of hay and straw, and twenty-five per cent. of the coarsest flour. . . In the markets, there was nothing to see except a few dead dogs and cats—no flour, no vegetables; hundreds, perhaps, thousands of old people and little children have died of hunger.' To get through the work, and to prevent overcrowding in the street, the distribution was on one occasion kept up all night, by which means ninety-six thousand five hundred persons were succoured. George Moore was again in Paris after the mad proceedings of the Commune, when some fresh succours were administered, and the Commission wound up.

Our limited space will not allow us to do more than run over a few concluding particulars in the life of this remarkable man. In appreciation of his character, he was made High Sheriff of Cumberland, where he latterly spent much of his time. In this new position he endeavoured to move the Poor-law administrators of four northern English counties to introduce the practice of boarding orphan paupers among private families, instead of huddling them up in the Union workhouse. What was the result of this effort, we do not know. It is at least curious to note that a practice which has been in successful operation in Scotland for a century, should need to be forced on the attention of the nearest English counties, as if it were a new discovery in social economics. In winter, when in London, he resumed his benevolences, which latterly amounted to seventeen thousand pounds a year. His health again gave way, and for its recovery he went for a time to Vichy. In the autumn, he got back to Cumberland. With the view of attending a meeting for a benevolent object, he drove with his wife to Carlisle. While standing in the street talking to a friend, two runaway horses which had escaped from a livery-stable came galloping at a furious pace. By one of them he was knocked down, and fell on his head and shoulder. He was taken up insensible, and carried into the Gray Goat Inn, in which he had slept fifty-two years before; and here, notwithstanding all medical aid, he died from the injuries he had sustained, on the 21st of November 1876.

The sad intelligence of George Moore's death produced a universal and sorrowful sensation in town and country. A gap had been made in the ranks of Christian heroism which it would be difficult to fill up. He was doubtless a great and good man, quite a wonder for his extraordinary energy and singleness of purpose, and a greater wonder still for his marvellous spirit of benevolence. We do not learn that he devoted any part of his great wealth to purposes connected with the cultivation of science or the higher branches of learning; and indeed, to judge from a passing observation made by him, he seems to have fallen into the error of identifying

scientific demonstrations with the teachings of atheism. Under pious impulses, giving for objects for which he had a fancy, became a kind of frenzy; and although it is mentioned that he ordinarily took pains to inquire into the merits of cases calling for his pecuniary aid, it is to be feared he was often imposed on, and that taking the mildest view of his charitable contributions, they could for the most part have no other tendency than to aggravate the very pauperism they were designed to meliorate. To the prodigious mischief done in all our large cities by the sapping effects of inconsiderate philanthropy, we have lately drawn attention in an article 'THE POWER OF DRAW,' and looking at the vast importance of the subject, we shall endeavour to return to it at the earliest opportunity. Meanwhile, giving Dr Smiles credit for his laboriously executed work, we trust the sketch we have offered may be accepted as a small tribute to the many acknowledged excellences in the character of GEORGE MOORE.

W. C.

HELENA, LADY HARROGATE.

CHAPTER XLII.—STRICKEN DOWN.

'HURRAH! hurrah! hurrah!' and yet again 'Hurrah!' The deep ringing shout grew louder—so it seemed—at every repetition, as though the shouters, at the sound of their own voices, had warmed to their work. 'Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!' Shrill boys, gruff men, stripling yokels that alternated between bass and treble, helped to swell the increasing roar of popular exultation. The carrier passing with his cart, the rustic trudging with shouldered hoe homewards, the wandering tinker stopped and marvelled at the unaccustomed sounds floated on the noonday breeze.

The English farm-labourer is—as those who know him well and, with all his shortcomings, like him well, will admit—a dumb animal. His efforts to speak articulately are often painful to his best friends, and indeed, as a rule, his tongue is an organ which from lack of use has almost ceased to be efficient. Your town workman uses six words, your operative ten, to his one growlingly uttered monosyllable. But under the pressure of excitement, if he cannot talk, he can cheer. Stir his slow blood to anger and he can be loud enough. Give him beer gratis and he will be louder.

There was beer flowing without stint, and of better quality than the neighbouring alehouse supplied, and there was cider also for all comers on that day at Carbery Chase; and it was quite wonderful with what rapidity the news spread, or how it was telegraphed to solitary shepherds amid the heather, to husbandmen kindling weed-fires on hill-tops, to woodcutters plying axe and hedge-bill in the coppice, that the lost heiress of the De Veres was found, and that there was eleemosynary liquor at Carbery for whatsoever thirsty soul came that way.

Richard Hold had done it all. He had come down that morning from *The Traveller's Rest* to Carbery Court, had effected an entry with but faint-hearted opposition on the part of the half-terrified servants; and after the briefest interview with Sir Sykes, had called together the startled household, and had roundly, and in a discourse

garnished with strange expletives, proclaimed Miss Ruth Willis to be Helena, Lady Harrogate, the only child (supposed to have been drowned in the Thames nearly twenty years before) of the late Baroness Clare, and whose rightful name had only just by accident been revealed.

It was an astounding story, thus told, and one which needed to be confirmed; but what better confirmation could the hearers have than that which was afforded by the presence of the baronet, standing ever at Hold's side, conferring with him in confidential tones, and corroborating by word and gesture the loose and random statements of this extraordinary coadjutor! That the servants should bow, smirk, and submit, when once they found that Sir Sykes lent his countenance to the new order of things, was but natural. Well-trained servants, to please a solvent master, would accede to most doctrines. And the idea of the finding of the lost child, lost under circumstances so touching, had in itself the power to arouse the leaven of romance that lies dormant in almost every mind.

The sad story of that poor young Clare, in her own right Lady Harrogate, whose child had disappeared within a few months of its father's death in the hunting-field, was known to every village gossip on the shady side of forty. That the lost heiress—heiress to a bare title, but as such the head of the ancient race of the De Veres—should be found, was precisely one of those marvels which suit with the popular imagination. Heirs, and heiresses too, have been before to-day reinstated in their rights amidst bell-ringing and triumphal arches and the honest joy of sympathetic multitudes.

But—there was a *but* in the case—to the credit of the local population, although people were quite willing to fling up their hats and bawl themselves hoarse for the providential recovery of the missing Helena, Lady Harrogate, all seemed reluctant to believe that the brows on which the coronet should devolve were those of Miss Willis. Had the Indian orphan been suddenly 'wanted' by London policemen on suspicion of ring-stealing or the passing of forged bank-notes, fifty village oracles would have been found to declare that the surprise was no surprise to them. But in the midst of all the buzz and hum and stir which the tidings occasioned, might be distinguished an undercurrent of regret that fortune should have selected so sly a young person as the recipient of her favours.

Rumour, the general voice of fame concerning man or woman, grossly as it exaggerates, seldom fails to hit off some salient point, and so contains a germ of truth. And it is extraordinary by what unknown means facts the most carefully concealed do contrive to gain a surreptitious publicity. Excepting Sir Sykes and his two daughters, there was hardly a man, woman, or child on the estate who had not some hazy notions to the effect that Miss Ruth Willis slipped from the house by night to meet somebody, had mysterious correspondence with somebody, stole letters, played the spy on other inmates of the house, and was indeed by no means a model of feminine innocence and candour.

The servants and the villagers—glad of the temporary excitement which the proclamation of the new-found heiress afforded—yet grudging

Ruth her promotion. She bore her blushing honours modestly enough, it was admitted; but then, as it was uncharitably surmised, that was all a part of those artful 'goings-on' that were attributed to her. What had she to do with that seafaring fellow, with the blue thin scar over one eyebrow, as likely to have been got from the brass-hilted cutlass of a man-of-war's man as from the creese of a Malay? Why did she glide, cat-like, through the shadows of night, and why drop letters with her own hand into the slits of village post-offices, not trusting the locked letter-bag of the mansion, as an honest young lady should do? Why, indeed? And yet it seemed she was to be called 'my Lady' now; and those who remembered the pomp and power of the late lord regarded her as little less than a princess.

Sir Sykes Denzil, tottering rather than walking at Hold's side, resembled a somnambulist rather than a man in the full possession of his waking faculties. 'He don't seem to be quite hisself, he don't!' was the remark of more than one sympathetic hedger and ditcher, as he marked the feeble gait, the vacant eye, and the abject pomposity—if such a phrase may be coined for the occasion—of the master of all. It was a cruel ordeal for Sir Sykes. It had not come upon him without warning. Ruth had spoken to him over-night, and he had sat up alone in the library till very late, schooling himself how best to bear the trial. He thought he had learned the necessary lesson when at length he laid his throbbing head on its soft pillows.

But the trial, in its hard, nude reality, in the garish, searching light of day, had seemed so much more terrible to Sir Sykes than his previous idea of it had been, that he had proved all too weak an Atlas to cope with such a load of care. In the course of the morning, Hold had arrived, bold and boastful; and in ten minutes more the dreaded publicity was given to the fact that Ruth Willis was the heiress of the De Veres, and that the living voucher for her claims was Sir Sykes Denzil. A more miserable position than that of the master of Carbery Chase cannot well be conceived. Had he been suddenly called on to account for some old crime, which tardy justice had at length scented out, he could better have borne it than when he found himself dragged along at Hold's side, to sanction the adventurer's statements and commands. It was by Hold's orders that the ale was flowing from a score of casks, that the bells in three church towers had struck up a joy-peal, that a bawling crowd of untimely revellers had collected around the ancient buttery hatch. All the other members of the family had acquitted themselves fairly well. Jasper had publicly congratulated his bride-elect on the lucky discovery. Jasper's excellent sisters had kissed Ruth, crying, as girls will kiss and cry on every occasion of mirth or sorrow. 'I am so glad, dear!' Lucy had said bewildered, and Blanche had echoed her words. It had never occurred to either of the baronet's daughters to question the truth of a revelation for which their father stood sponsor.

'Ale and cider, since they like it, for the clodhoppers; punch and wine for the farmers,' commanded Hold. 'None of your washy claret, but good old-fashioned port and sherry, d'ye hear?—Up with the cobwebbed bottles, Mr Butler, and make the corks fly.—And you, lads, shew the

metal you're made of! One cheer more, and let it be a good one—Helena, Lady Harrogate!'

To this and much more Sir Sykes gave an obsequious assent. He had not as yet had to run the gantlet of any positive questioning as to the details of the story of the lost heiress's disappearance and recovery. His own household, in the excitement of the hour, accepted assertion in the place of proof. Two phrases there were which Sir Sykes, with dull iteration, often repeated. 'My esteemed friend Mr Hold, to whose active exertions this discovery is chiefly due,' that was one of them. The other was: 'This young lady, whose rights I consider to be beyond dispute, and whose champion, in case of need, I shall ever be willing to be.' The baronet repeated these catchwords over and over again, like a lesson imperfectly learned, and each time there came a murmur of mild applause from the docile audience.

At last there was a murmur as of expectation, and almost of alarm, amid the crowd, and Lord Harrogate, who had ridden over from High Tor, came into the centre of the principal group, smiling.

'The great news has brought me, like the other neighbours,' he said half-jestingly, as he shook hands first with Lucy and Blanche Denzil, and then bowed gravely to Ruth, as he passed on to take the trembling hand that Sir Sykes half-mechanically extended. 'If I have heard aright, I have no further claim to the name they call me by; although, more fortunate than other usurpers, I have another title on which to fall back, and need not become just plain Mr De Vere. But this is a surprise for us all, Sir Sykes.'

Sir Sykes Denzil's face worked painfully, every muscle seeming to quiver like that of a martyr at the stake. He glanced at Hold more with the piteous appealing look that a performing dog directs at his master than with the expression of a responsible human being.

'My esteemed friend, Mr Hold,' he muttered in a thick voice that struck strangely on the ear.

'Ah! Mr Hold then knows all about the mystery?' said Lord Harrogate with a quiet smile.

'Yes; I know a thing or two,' boldly returned Richard; 'and so too does Sir Sykes Denzil, Baronet. Don't doubt, squire, or "my lord"—though you must down your flag now, and give up the Harrogate title to "my Lady" here—that we shall be able to produce manifest, invoice, and log-book to make good the ship's claims to the name she's called by.—Shan't we, Sir Sykes?'

Sir Sykes thus cited, made an effort to speak. 'This young lady,' he began, and then was mute.

'This young lady,' said Lord Harrogate, turning to Ruth, and speaking with a graceful courtesy that became him well, 'shall not, I assure you, be delayed in the acquisition of her lawful due by any act of mine or of my family, when once the romantic history has been explained a little more clearly than has hitherto been the case. If she turns out to be really the lost child of my cousin Clare, Lady Harrogate, I can promise that all at High Tor will'—

'Whose champion—champion,' interrupted Sir Sykes, continuing the sentence he had begun, in the same thick unnatural voice as before, 'yes, whose champion'—

Then there came a crash and a shriek and a rush of feet, and the gabble and outcry and uplifting of many voices. All seemed to speak and none to listen; but one thing was certain—Sir Sykes had fallen down in a fit; and they raised him speechless and helpless, with distorted face and stiffened limbs, and bore him in and laid him on his bed. 'Paralysis,' was the verdict of the doctor who was summoned in hot haste; 'and I fear his death-blow.'

ACCLIMATISATION OF ANIMALS.

MUSEUMS of natural history and collections of wild animals, either in gardens or in travelling shows, have spread a taste for natural history and the acclimatisation of animals over all countries and among all classes. Everywhere scientific institutions have risen up, and to the knowledge of living beings has been closely allied the study of physical geography. Climates suitable to each animal have to be provided—warmth for those from the equator, marshy ground for the amphibious tribes, a northern aspect for the polar bears; thus surrounding them artificially with the natural conditions of their country.

The question of taming and acclimatising animals belonging to other countries has occupied the minds of our naturalists for some time past. Every one agrees that the acquisition of new species would be a real benefit, by making our means of subsistence more certain. What has been done in times long past may be done in the present day. The greater number of domestic animals, now forming such a source of riches to Europe, do not originally belong to this continent. When the races of men wandered over this part of the world, where we now see all the wonders of industry and the conquests of agriculture, what did they find? Among trees, the oak; among animals, the wild boar. All our fine domestic varieties are borrowed from other lands. What Nature had refused to our climate, man's patience has given to it. Possessor of a superior intellect, the European has augmented his strength by the cosmopolitan force of the animal kingdom.

Can this peaceful conquest be said to have terminated? Is the work of domesticating animals accomplished? Science says No. There are still a great number of exotics upon which man may try his skill. Most of these are to be found in menageries, but only as objects of curiosity. Some may be brought under the yoke, even tamed, without being domesticated. There is an hereditary law by which these modifications can be acquired: the progeny of wild parents is wild, that of a tamed father and mother is born tame. The inclinations, character, and faculties which the conquered species acquire in connection with man, are transmitted to their offspring. A sort of slow progress in the constitution of the creature is continued from generation to generation, until a new course of life is finally adopted. If man has not appropriated the help and the flesh of a greater number of animals, he must neither accuse his

climate, nor the different temperatures of the globe, nor the primitive ways of refractory beasts; but must rather own, that having provided for his more urgent necessities by the assimilation of a small number of useful species, he has now abandoned a pursuit which demands many sacrifices and much patient industry.

Europe possesses some thirty-five domestic species of animals, among which about thirty-one may be counted as belonging to the older world, and four to that of America. Most naturalists agree in thinking this number too few. To possess an adequate idea of the benefits which arise from them to agriculture, trade, and art, we must picture the loss which would accrue if one species only, as the horse, the ass, the sheep, or the fowl, were to disappear. Among these, some contribute to our nourishment; others, like the sheep, give us clothing as well; whilst others, as efficient auxiliaries, undertake with their strong limbs an amount of work which would otherwise fall entirely on man.

Let us glance at a few specimens of the animal kingdom over which it would be reasonable to expect a conquest. Among carnivorous types the most useful and intelligent is undoubtedly the dog. Some persons, ignorant of facts, imagine that if man has not reclaimed from a state of nature more of the great flesh-eaters, it is on account of the natural ferocity of these creatures. But that is not the obstacle. There are examples of lions, tigers, bears, and wolves which have become tractable and even completely tamed. The hyena, which has been treated as an object of aversion, and which naturalists of a former period painted under such dark colours, has already passed into the domestic state in many parts of Africa, where it gives services to its master akin to those of the most faithful and attached dog. The education of the feline race has also begun, as, for instance, the cheetah or hunting cat, which belies the general notion of the tiger's cruelty. Good and docile in a state of liberty, it follows its Indian lords to the chase; when confined, it pleases its keepers by its amiability. It is true that it presents certain structural differences from others of the feline tribe; the anterior part of the brain is higher, and its claws, which are not retractile, are differently formed from those of the tiger; but it may be asked if these have been furnished by nature or created by education?

There exists another animal which might be trained to render us great service, that is the seal, which is slaughtered so mercilessly for the sake of its oil and skin. Intelligent and affectionate, it possesses all the qualities suitable for a domestic state. The director of the Museum at Dijon had so skilfully tamed one some years ago, that though by nature amphibious, its primitive habits were changed, and it rarely went into the water, placing itself during the winter close to its master in the warm corner of the fireside, stretched on the wood-ashes. If pains were taken to teach the seal, it might become to the fisherman what the dog is to the hunter. Nor need we despair of such a result, for the Chinese train the remora or sucking-fish to catch turtles, and the heron and cormorant to capture fishes. The coasts of England would be fit places for the education of the seal. The value of such help may be imagined when we think of the great solitude of the sea—so many

times larger than the space covered by land—where man has no ally, and can only count upon those who dread him. What an interest for him in the very element itself, to have a friend and companion who would follow him in his fishing expeditions! There are not wanting conclusive results which have been obtained in individual cases; and if the same care were extended to the race, we may say that the seal is an ally ready prepared by Nature.

If we pass from the carnivorous tribes to the herbivorous we soon perceive that many species are domesticated by the people of Asia, Africa, and America, to which they owe much of their riches; such as the camel, the quagga, the llama, and the alpaca. The camel and the dromedary, by their patience, and through the structure of their stomach which allows of their enduring the privation of water, might render their services, in many parts of Europe, more valuable than those of the best horses. They have been put to work in some zoological gardens with economical results; in the Jardin des Plantes at Paris, they have for a long time past drawn the water from the well for the use of the large establishment; and it is found that the labour of one is just double that performed by a strong horse. They require less food; and thus there is a clear profit for the Society. The camel's foot, however, is not adapted like that of the llama for scaling rocks and mountainous districts.

The llama is the camel of America. Although slow in its movements and small in size, it need not be despised as a beast of burden, especially in poor mountainous districts, where the ass, the horse, and the mule have some difficulty in finding nourishment. In some parts of Switzerland, Hungary, and the Alps of Dauphiné, perhaps even in Scotland, their introduction would be a real piece of good fortune. Natives of the Andes, the highest mountains in the world, their step is very sure; they can descend, when heavily laden, most dangerous ravines, and take roads through rocks on the borders of precipices where man would hesitate to follow. The llama requires little care; it needs no shelter, and finds for itself a means of subsistence wherever it may be. Nor is it only a carrying animal, but also valuable to the butcher, the flesh being much esteemed; whilst the hair when spun produces beautiful stuffs. It is not, however, equal in this respect to the alpaca, the hair of which is as fine as that of the Cashmere goat, and much longer. Where these two animals have been introduced into Europe, they have retained their health and produced young ones. There are few zoological gardens where this result has not been obtained. The llama is indeed already partly acclimatised in Holland. If these attempts were steadily carried on, in half a century llamas would make a good show among our flocks. Without forgetting our old friends the horse or the sheep, we should have introduced a new element into agriculture and commerce.

There is an animal possessed of great rapidity of motion, known in the United States as the wapiti or eland. It is a species of deer, and is certainly a noble creature, the pride of the American forests, and has been tamed by the Indians, to whom it renders all the services of a domestic race, carrying their burdens, and

drawing sledges over the ice of winter with perfect ease. Its flesh is also very palatable. A German naturalist was the first to introduce it into the streets of Baltimore some time ago; and four were brought to England so long since as 1817, when they were purchased at a high price by Lord James Murray, who succeeded in rearing three generations. One was seen in London harnessed to a tilbury, like a horse, and drawing it with remarkable vigour. It is supposed to be allied to the race of antediluvian elks, whose enormous bones are found as fossils buried in the remains of forests in the Irish bogs.

We must allow that the range of our alimentary food is poor compared with the rich supply which Nature has scattered over the globe, and of which we have appropriated but a small part. It would occupy too much space to mention the foreign mammifers which might enrich our tables; but there is one which recommends itself strongly by its large size, the abundance of its flesh, and the ease with which it can be tamed, namely the American tapir. This quadruped would complete our race of pigs with all their well-known utility. There is one important consideration to be taken into account in connection with this and many other species; it is, that all animals which are brought into a domestic state increase rapidly in numbers, notwithstanding the continual sacrifices made upon them for our wants. On the other hand, those which still exist only in a wild state diminish periodically; some indeed, such as the American bison, to all appearance will soon vanish altogether. As the races of men reclaim the land, they drive back the wild beasts; the larger varieties cannot maintain themselves in the vicinity of their enemies. Should Africa and Asia be one day peopled like North America, and the axe of the pioneer open the dense forests, two alternatives alone will remain—either the animals must be tamed by man, or disappear. By favouring the attempts to increase our domestic treasures, science is acting as a conservator. Many races exposed to the perpetual attacks of enemies, like the lion and tiger, or marked out, like the giraffe, by their size or brilliancy of colour, are likely in a few centuries to rank among lost species, unless they obtain protection from man.

Such has already been the fate of the dodo, a large bird allied to the pigeons, with short wings, formerly inhabiting Mauritius. Certain extermination seems to be in store for the beaver, which is so mercilessly trapped in many parts of America, its regular destruction going on without any regard to the breeding period. The emu is withdrawing rapidly before the Australian colonists; and the kangaroo, which was known but as yesterday, is slaughtered by thousands. It is, however, anticipated that this animal may be naturalised among us, births of marsupials having been obtained in some of our collections of natural history. But it seems as if it were only suited to its own regions; it leaps rather than runs; its attitude is often vertical, the tail when in this position serving as a pillar. The enormous size which some of them reach, the great strength in the hind-legs, the bounds of twelve or twenty feet high which it performs with ease—all tell us of a country where immense tufts of grass grow at considerable distances from each other, and where

the eye has to look onward from rock to rock and from bush to bush to find nourishment. It has been said that kangaroos which have been domesticated for a long period on the coast of Australia have lost their leaping power, that the height and strength of their form have diminished, and that they run on four legs more frequently. If these facts could be confirmed by experience, they would throw light on an obscure question: namely, 'What is the degree of influence exercised by exterior circumstances on the organisation of living beings?'

Of all the animals belonging to our temperate climates which might be made the most valuable, the reindeer merits our interest. It constitutes the great riches of the northern nations; stands in the place of the cow, the sheep, and the horse; for it nourishes its owner with its milk, warms him with its skin, and carries his burdens; its flesh also is excellent. What a prize would such an addition form in our country! Attempts have already been made to introduce it into the northern parts of Great Britain, but so far without happy results. The chief difficulty seems to rest with the climate; the reindeer, like all northern species, adheres with peculiar tenacity to its own latitudes. M. Esquiro, who writes with much earnestness on this subject, suggests that greater pains should be taken in managing the shades of temperature; an animal torn violently from its original home takes root in a new country with some difficulty. To successfully bring it from the cold of Norway, a system of organised and gradual transition is required.

Naturalists having observed the fact that no animal now acclimatised in Europe has come from a colder country, have perhaps been too ready to accept this observation as a law. Our civilisation coming from the east, the races brought with them the animals so indispensable to them. Commerce and steam uniting the different regions of the globe in peaceful relations, man might thus begin an organised action on animals by submitting them to a graduated scale of temperature, and thus enrich us with the exotic species so far denied to our climates.

THE HOUSE IN THE JUNGLE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.—SIBYL LORTON.

Most people in this world of changes and chances have at some period or other of their lives been placed, either through their own fault or that of others, or it may be by some sudden and unlooked-for mishap, in what is familiarly termed an 'awkward position.' For instance, a young gentleman of my acquaintance, by nature rather bashful than otherwise, informed me that on one occasion, while dancing the Lancers, his partner fainted in his arms in the middle of the grand chain. 'How could anything have been more uncomfortable for me?' said he. 'My dear fellow,' replied I, 'it might have been worse. You might have fainted in *her* arms, which would have made it far more uncomfortable for you—and for her.'

When I was at my first dinner-party, a lady asked me the question: 'Have you ever been placed in an awkward position?' Not being ready

with a suitable reply, and being desirous of avoiding even the appearance of awkwardness, I, Irish-like, answered the question by another: 'What is your idea of an awkward position, Mrs Reeves?' 'Asking after some one's nearest relation or dearest friend, and being told they are dead,' was her reply.

Certainly such a position would be rightly termed awkward; and I was glad to be able to assert with truth that I had never been similarly placed. But on one occasion—now many years ago—it was my lot to be placed in a very awkward position, not once only but several times; and the first of these occasions was the beginning of a series of events, which commonplace and unimportant as they may seem to those who may read of them in these pages, made a great and lasting impression upon me, and caused me to alter my whole course of life for a period of nearly two years. I was in India at the time, and had been there about eighteen months, during which time I had been for the most part living in Calcutta, studying my profession, and hoping one day to be fortunate enough to be appointed to one of the European civil stations. This good fortune came to me sooner than I had even ventured to hope for. A very old friend of my father's, who had been for some years the civil surgeon at Moode-
rand, a station about fifty miles from Calcutta, was compelled to go to England on sick-leave; and having interest, as it is called, and being willing to do the son of his old friend a good turn, he managed to get me appointed as his successor; and at the time of which I now speak I had been there about a fortnight, and was well satisfied with the station, and just then with my neighbours. In fact I was as happy as most young fellows of five-and-twenty would have been in my place; not very arduous duties to perform, plenty to amuse me, either at the club—which was the gift of the Maharajah of Moode-
rand—or at the houses of my fellow-countrymen; and this state of affairs might have lasted longer, had it not been for the occurrence of events which, as I said before, altered the whole course of my life, and of which the beginning was my being placed in an 'awkward position.'

I had risen early one morning, that is to say at five A.M., and started for my daily constitutional canter, when about a hundred yards or so from my own house I met the Judge on foot. 'Where are you going, Stanmore?' asked he.

'Oh, just for a gallop somewhere,' replied I. 'Whereabouts is the best place?'

'Go on to the old race-course,' said the Judge; 'you can get a good long gallop round it; and if you have a fancy for exploring, there are several roads leading off it; they will most of them take you on to the high-road. Take care not to lose yourself altogether.'

'Which way?' inquired I.

'Straight on till you come to a sign-post marked "Race-course No. 1;" then turn to the right.'

I thanked him, rode on, and following his directions, soon found myself at the race-course, which was about two miles distant. There, as the Judge had said, was plenty of smooth ground for a gallop; and after indulging in the pace till both my steed and myself were thoroughly heated, I drew rein, turned leisurely down one of the many roads leading off the race-course, and began to

wonder where it would take me to. I was not long left in doubt. In about a quarter of an hour I found myself again upon the race-course, having, like the man who followed his nose, returned to the place from which I had started. I tried another road. This time, my steed, a spirited young Burmah pony, grew impatient walking, and broke into a canter. I did not attempt to check him; but we had not proceeded far before an unlooked-for misfortune put an effectual stop to his impetuosity and my pleasure. A large stone, almost hidden by thick dust, lay in our path; my steed put his foot on it, stumbled and fell, throwing me right over his head. I was not hurt at all, and sprang to my feet instantly. Not so my poor pony: he too staggered up, but both his knees were severely cut, and in the fall the saddle-girths had broken. Here truly was an awkward position. I did not know where I was. I should have to find my way home on foot and lead my pony; which was, to say the least of it, ignominious; while to add to my troubles, the sun was rising, and in falling, I had so battered my large pith-hat that to wear it again was an impossibility. I was not desirous of perishing from sunstroke, but such a fate did not seem improbable. Fortunately round my hat was a large white 'puggeree;' this I took, and after one or two unsuccessful attempts, wound it round and over my head after the fashion of a Hindu turban, still further securing it with my pocket-handkerchief; then taking hold of the bridle, I prepared for a fresh start.

'Which way should I go? Back to the race-course or straight on?'

I soon decided the latter, although I had not an idea where it could lead me to; but it was by far the most shady; and I hoped to meet with some low-caste Hindu on the road who would agree to go to my house and direct one of my servants to come to my assistance. I had not proceeded above two hundred yards down the road, which was on each side bordered by high and thick jungle, when all at once I came in sight of a house; no mud hut, no thatched bungalow, but a real stone house, small indeed and low built, but with stables and servants' quarters attached. My hopes rose at the prospect of so soon getting assistance, but almost immediately sank again, for I reflected that in all probability this was the dwelling-place of some high-caste Brahmin, who would regard my presence, did I intrude it upon him, as an insult. Standing still, I took a survey of the building, which was close to the road; the entrance was to the side, and a square piece of ground was between the house and the stables. While I hesitated, the sound of a long shrill whistle broke upon my ear.

'Come now,' said I to myself; 'that sounds European; I never yet heard a Bengalee whistle. I'll go in.' So I entered the compound, and advanced slowly towards the house, still leading my pony. The whistle was repeated. A lady emerged suddenly from the house, and stood before me; then she started, and for a minute or two we both stared at each other in silence. Well might we, for the outward appearance in both cases was, to say the least of it, uncommon, especially in mine. In coat and trousers that had once been white, but were now gray with dust, and in places stained with the blood of my unfortunate steed; no hat, but in its stead an extremely dirty white puggeree,

and a red silk bandana, I am conscious that I must have looked anything but an English gentleman, and that any one not acquainted with me would have been justified in taking me for a loafer. But if my companion had good reason for staring at me, which I can assure you she did, I also might be excused for returning her the compliment, for her attire, though not disreputable like mine, was, well—peculiar. She had evidently not expected visitors so early. She had on a brown holland dress, which, like my coat, would look better after it had been to the wash. Nothing very strange, so far. But what did surprise me was, that she was wearing a regimental mess-jacket that had once been scarlet, but was now faded to a dingy red; while a Turkish fez, several shades darker in colour, was set on her light yellow locks, which were cut quite short. In one hand she held a long bamboo cane; by the other she led in a chain a half-bred, black and tan, collie dog. She was quite young, apparently not more than eighteen or nineteen years of age, and in spite of her strange attire, both pretty and lady-like. But there was something about her face, a sort of nervous, restless expression in the blue eyes, now fixed so intently upon me, that at once gave the idea that, young as she was, she had already seen more than the ordinary every-day trials of this life.

'I beg your pardon,' I began confusedly, feeling that to raise my hat—an impossible task under the circumstances—would have somewhat relieved my embarrassment; 'but, I—I have had an accident; my pony is badly hurt. I do not know the way; and the sun'—

Here the girl, who had not once taken her eyes off my face, broke in, saying: 'You are English then?'

'Certainly I am,' I replied, speaking with all the pride an Englishman thinks fit to adopt when owing to his nationality in a foreign land.

'I do not like the English!' exclaimed my companion.

'Good gracious!' was my mental comment. 'What a sentiment to fall from the lips of a lady in an Indian jungle.—I am sorry for it,' I remarked aloud, 'as it is one of your own countrymen who now asks a favour of you.'

'I am not English, at least only partly.'

'Indeed,' said I, feeling relieved as I noted her flaxen hair and fair skin.

'Yes; my mother was a Swede.'

I cannot say I felt particularly interested in the fact; perhaps at any other time I should have been more sympathetic; but just then my thoughts were occupied far more with the ways and means of getting home than anything else. I was hot, tired, and not at all disposed to stand about in the sun chattering to a young lady, however pretty and agreeable she might be. So without any reply to her remark beyond a cold 'Indeed,' I continued: 'I am very sorry to have intruded at this early hour. I had not ventured to hope for such good-luck as meeting one of my own nation here.'

'Good-luck you call it!' exclaimed the girl, coming closer and gazing into my face with an interest that gave me quite an uncomfortable feeling. 'What, then, do you think it must be for me, who have not seen a white face, except one, for the last— How long was it? I cannot remember,'

she added, putting her hand to her head, and looking at me with an air of such utter helplessness as I had never seen before, and hope never to see again in one so young.

For a moment I forgot all about myself and my anxiety to get home as quickly as possible; a feeling of indescribable interest for this oddly attired, strange-speaking girl awoke in me, and prompted me to remain and converse with her; only for a moment though. I am by no means a romantic man; on the contrary, I am generally set down as matter of fact; and in spite of a strong yet natural desire to stay a little longer with my newly formed acquaintance, the mere switching of my pony's tail as some flies settled on his back, and the buzzing of one or two more of the same obnoxious insects in my face, recalled me instantly to the stern necessity of getting home without delay.

'Pardon me,' said I hastily; 'I must get home before the sun gets high. I have lost my way. Can you direct me?'

'Where to?' she inquired listlessly. 'I do not know where you live.'

'In Mooderland,' I replied; 'one of those houses beyond the railway.'

'The railway!' she repeated, surprised. 'Is there a railway here? Sometimes I have fancied I heard the trains, at night chiefly. Tell me,' she went on eagerly, 'is it anywhere near the river?'

'The river?' said I. 'What?'

'The river down there,' she interrupted, waving her hand vaguely. 'There is a bank. Yes; that must be the railway embankment. In one place the road crosses it; does it not?'

'Yes,' I replied; 'but it is not near the river.'

'Not near the river! What, then, can that bank be?' she exclaimed quickly. 'Is it another railway?—Ah,' dropping her voice, and moving suddenly away from me—'here he is!'

I looked round, wondering what could have caused such a change in my companion; the eager, excited look in her blue eyes was one of actual terror, and her whole bearing was that of one under the influence of fear. I beheld nothing more formidable than an elderly gray-bearded, gray-haired gentleman, who had come up behind me on foot, and was now standing eyeing me with mingled curiosity, surprise, suspicion, and displeasure. I thought him a very forbidding, unpleasant-looking old party; but after all, he had reason to feel surprised at finding a strange young man of such disreputable appearance talking to his daughter—for such I judged was the relationship between them—so I hastened to explain the cause of my presence in his domains!

'Ahem!' said he when I had finished the account of my misfortunes. 'May I inquire whom I have the honour of addressing?'

'Eustace Stanmore, Civil Surgeon of Mooderland,' I replied, with all a young man's pride in his first appointment; 'at your service, sir.'

The elderly gentleman did not seem much impressed by the fact, I thought, for he merely bowed slightly and stiffly, and inquired in what way he could serve me.

'If you will lend me a hat, and tell me which way to go,' was my reply, 'I will walk home; and if you would be kind enough to let my pony stand in your stables until I can send my sycle for him, I shall be very much obliged.'

'I will send one of my own servants with him,

Mr Stanmore,' said the old gentleman, 'if you will tell me where your house is.—Oh, the other side of the line. I will see to it. And now I must ask a favour of you. Will you give me your word of honour as a gentleman never to mention to any one that you have seen me and this young lady here?'

I hesitated a moment, not so much from unwillingness to comply with the request, as from astonishment at the nature of it. Unconsciously my eyes wandered to the young girl, who had not moved since the old gentleman's arrival. Our eyes met for an instant; and I saw her lips frame the word 'Promise.' What impulse moved me to give the required pledge I know not. I was young, thoughtless, and did not pause to think what might be the consequences of my impetuosity; but I faithfully promised secrecy.

'Thank you, Mr Stanmore,' said the elderly gentleman; 'I feel sure I can trust you. Now, come in and have a cup of tea before you start home.'

This offer, however, I declined, feeling that I had already stayed long enough, and that it was quite time for me to be returning to my professional duties in Mooderland; so, after assuming one of my new acquaintance's sun-hats, in lieu of the aforesaid dirty white puggeree, and giving my pony in charge to a sycle whom he summoned, I wished him good-morning; and receiving ample directions as to the way, started homewards. As I passed the windows, or rather the green shutters which served for windows, that looked out on the road, I again saw the girl—who had disappeared while I was selecting a hat—leaning out, evidently on the watch for some one. Seeing me, she threw something white at my feet, entreated me almost in a whisper not to look at it till I got home, and vanished.

I picked up the scrap of paper, put it in my pocket, and hurried away down the road, wondering much at the strange events of the morning. Arrived at home I at once opened and read the note, which ran thus: 'Are you willing to serve a woman in distress and danger? If so, come on Friday night at eight o'clock to where the road crosses the bank by the river. It will be moonlight.' There was no signature to this mysterious letter; the writing, though evidently done in haste, was unmistakably that of a lady.

To say that I was puzzled by these circumstances would be giving but a faint description of my wonder and perplexity. 'Who could this strange girl be? Why were she and her father living in such an isolated spot? What did she mean by "distress and danger?"' So ran my thoughts; until at last, after indulging in a series of the wildest conjectures, I worked myself up into such a state of curiosity and excitement, that I determined, no matter what came of it, to obey the strange summons, and be at the appointed place on Friday night. A difficulty presented itself immediately. Being, as I have already said, a stranger to the locality, I did not know what was meant by the bank, the road, or the river. Fortune favoured me, however. The next morning I was out riding again (luckily for my pleasure, I could afford to keep two ponies), and met the superintendent of police, likewise on horseback. We rode on together to the race-course, and after galloping round it, my com-

panion struck off straight across country, I following him till we reached a long dike.

'What is this for?' inquired I.

'It was made some years ago after the river Dum broke its banks and flooded the land as far as the railway,' replied he.

'Where then is the river?'

'Close by. Ride up on the dike and you will see it.'

I did so. A regular pathway had been trodden on the top of the dike, or 'bund' as it is called; and I walked my horse along it, while I viewed the now shallow waters and the sandy shores of the Dum. Presently some way ahead I saw some natives, driving before them oxen laden with straw, cross right over the bund.

'Do the roads cross over this?' asked I of my companion.

'Yes,' replied he; 'at different places. There is one a little way from here.'

Evidently this was the spot that strange young girl had appointed for our meeting-place next Friday night. I was beginning to grow very excited about it, and to long for Friday evening to come; though, as that day was only Tuesday, I had to exercise a little patience.

At last the time came; and with a beating heart and bounding pulse I rode my pony to the appointed meeting-place, at which I arrived a few minutes after eight. It was, as the unknown fair one had said it would be, a moonlight night; but although in general an ardent admirer of Nature and its beauties, I thought only now of the advantage we should both of us gain by having light. I had not long to wait; first a loud bark broke the stillness of the air, and the black collie appeared; then followed his mistress with a slow hesitating step, looking anxiously around her all the while, as though in fear of detection. Her attire was different from what it had been when I first saw her; the scarlet mess-jacket was replaced by an opera cloak, somewhat the worse for wear; but the Turkish fez still adorned her short fair locks.

Seeing her, I dismounted, and leaving my docile steed standing alone, advanced to greet her.

She recognised me instantly, for she laid her hand on her dog's collar, and addressed me by my name. 'Good-evening, Mr Stanmore; I am so glad you have come.'

'Good-evening,' replied I. 'You have the advantage of me. I am still ignorant how to address one who has so far honoured me as to ask for my assistance.'

'My name is Sibyl Lorton,' returned my companion, quickly. 'Did he not tell you?'

'Who?' asked I. 'Your father?—No; he did not.'

'He is not my father,' interrupted the girl hastily. 'Bad as he was, my father would never have treated me like this.'

'Is he then your uncle?' inquired I.

'Yes,' she replied; 'my father's brother. Brothers in all that was bad, they were.—Tell me,' she went on hurriedly, 'has it ever occurred to you what I am, and why I am here?'

It had more than once occurred to me that my fair companion was a little out of her mind, but I did not like to tell her so, and only answered something to the effect that I wondered at any European lady living in such a solitary place.

'It is not of my own free will that I live there, I can assure you,' she responded earnestly. 'Have you the patience to listen to a long story, Mr Stanmore?'

I assented, for my curiosity was more than ever excited.

'First of all then,' began the girl, drawing closer to me, and looking anxiously around her, as if she feared some one might be watching us, 'I must tell you of my mother. She was a Swedish opera singer, who being left an orphan when only twenty years of age, joined one or two of her countrymen, like herself in search of fortune, and came to London, where, after a little time she, being a good English scholar, succeeded in procuring an engagement at one of the minor theatres. At the end of a year she became acquainted with two brothers, Norris and Osmond Lorton, the latter of whom it was afterwards my misfortune to call "father." No two brothers could have been more alike in disposition; no two more unlike in outward appearance. Norris Lorton there is no need to describe; you have already seen him. Osmond was fully three inches taller than his brother, well made, dark haired and eyed, handsome enough to captivate many a simple maiden, and with a soft voice and fascinating manners that soon won for him the love of my poor mother, who believed in him as implicitly as so many do ere they are deceived. He married her, and then she soon learned her mistake; soon found that he, with his agreeable exterior, was to the full as selfish, grasping, and cruel as Norris Lorton, the villain in whose power I now am. I will not dwell upon the misery of her married life; her husband's cruel treatment in time broke her heart; and at twelve years of age—the time when it seemed to me I needed her most—I lost her.

'About three months before her death an event occurred which I may say was the beginning of my troubles, and is the cause of my imprisonment in this jungle. A distant relation of my mother's, of whom she had not heard for years, died suddenly and left her a considerable sum of money, quite sufficient to have maintained her in comfort for life; but she never lived to enjoy it. After her death I never knew my father speak a kind word to me. He never had been an affectionate parent as long as I could remember, but now his treatment of me became so harsh that I dreaded being in the same room with him. Child-like, I often wondered what was the cause of this dislike to me, but it was not long before I learned the truth. My mother, ere she died, had made a will leaving the bulk of her newly acquired fortune—reserving only a small annuity for my father—to me, and he was unable to touch a penny of it. My poor mother, knowing her husband's extravagant habits, had taken this precaution for securing a maintenance to her only child. Ah, could she but have foreseen the troubles it has brought upon me! Thank God, she is spared that now! Here my companion's voice broke down, and a sob escaped her lips; but before I could offer her my sympathy, she resumed her narrative.

'I did not know about it at the time, being too young to understand; but my father went to law and disputed my mother's right to settle the money on me, on the ground that she was

insane—the most false accusation ever brought against a good noble woman!’ she exclaimed fiercely. ‘But his villainous brother supported him strongly, and so did several other of his relations. I had but one to help me—the manager of the theatre at which my mother had so long been employed, and whom she had appointed as the trustee of my fortune. He stood by me bravely, and we won; the verdict was given in our favour, and our enemies were baffled.’

‘My life even then was a very unhappy one. I was under the charge of Mrs Norris Lorton, a stern puritanical woman, who used to delight to give me daily discourses upon the wickedness of the rising generation and the love of money being the root of all evil, in which I frequently read allusions to myself and my ill-fated fortune. My education too was sadly neglected; I was sent to a cheap third-rate day-school, where I learned next to nothing. At the age of sixteen I was taken away altogether, and for another year dragged out a miserable existence at Norris Lorton’s house. At the end of that time, I did the most foolish thing I could have done under the circumstances, as it gave my enemies a handle against me—I ran away. Yes; one afternoon in November I, with five shillings in my pocket, left my aunt’s house, resolving in my mind never to return, feeling sure that among the crowds in the great metropolis I should never be discovered, and without the slightest thought or care as to how I should find my living for the future. My flight was speedily terminated by an unforeseen circumstance.’

GOSSIP ABOUT PEDLERS AND BEGGARS.

A SHORT time ago we were at work quietly in our usual sitting-room, when glancing from the window we noticed a swaggering individual approach. He rang the door-bell imperiously, and told the servant to say that he had got a box which contained a quantity of fragrant wood from Brazil, excellent for exterminating moths and other troublesome insects. To get rid of the fellow, we invested in two bits of this wood, for which we paid sixpence. The pieces were each about two inches long and an inch broad. They were of a dark-red colour, and had a strong odour, somewhat like cinnamon and cloves. We laid them on a table in the only room where we had ever seen moths—namely the drawing-room; and not placing especial faith in their powers of destruction, we straightway forgot all about them. Some little time after, a visitor chanced to call, and remarked that we had got two pieces of touchwood on the table, asking us also if there was anything remarkable about them. To our surprise, on lifting and examining our recent purchase we found the bits of wood no longer red, but white; while not a vestige of scent remained in them. The imposture was ingenious. Ordinary touchwood had been steeped in some strong-smelling, high-coloured essence, and we as some other people had been ‘taken in.’ We had a good laugh at our own expense. But experience does not *always* teach, as will be presently proved.

One day while at dinner, a sponge-merchant came to the door. He was well dressed, had a good manner, and his wares looked fresh and new. We bought a large fine sponge, for which we paid an unusually small price. After soaking the sponge in water to take out the sand, we were amazed to find not only a very considerable sandy deposit, but an utterly astonishing and overwhelming smell of the sea—not to be accounted for by any previous experience of sponges. Upon examination we found that our sponge had been cleverly ‘doctored.’ It was a very old one evidently, quite rotten and utterly worthless; but the vendor had stiffened it well with sea-sand, had thereafter impregnated it with iodine—and after this had boldly ventured forth and traded upon our simplicity. Of course we again laughed, though not so heartily this time. The article had been well ‘got up,’ and this was all we could say. We never bought another sponge at the door again, preferring to patronise the legitimate emporiums for that useful article.

Some years ago we found it very difficult to procure as many eggs as we needed—they were scarce and very dear; and one winter day we were much pleased to see a tall country-looking man come up the street with a huge basket of very fine specimens. We despatched the servant to invite him to the door; and upon the man’s earnest assurance that he had just come from a farm which he mentioned, we bought several dozens of the beautiful large eggs. They were below the usual exorbitant market-price, and we rejoiced greatly at the prospect of enjoying these rural dainties at our breakfast for a week to come. Alas, every egg was rotten! We found that they had been old eggs purchased for a few pence, dexterously painted up and whitened, and palmed off on the public. The man never returned our way again.

It is amusing to see the different ways in which those who are by habit and reputed beggars, manage to throw a little halo of industry round themselves, by carrying about all sorts of cheap and meretricious jewellery, lace, paper, pencils, and other wares. An old soldier comes often and begs earnestly for sixpence, ‘just to help him to get to Newcastle.’ This same old soldier, by the way, came one night in the dark and received a shilling, upon which he departed, calling loudly upon Heaven to bless us all. Next morning he came in broad daylight professing to be *quite another man*. This time we were not duped.

An old and very odd-looking woman called ‘Dummy’ has come to our door and many other doors for the last twenty years, every Saturday. Our town seemed to be a splendid ‘Draw.’ Every door she went to sent forth a penny or broken victuals, &c., for her support. In the course of years, many of Dummy’s old friends died, but she always got lots of aid in coppers and food. For several Saturdays she did not appear at our door, and on inquiry it was found that the poor creature was ill. Being deaf and dumb, it was of course very difficult to communicate with her, especially as she had bolted and barred the door of her small dark

room. Medical aid, however, found its way at last to Dummy; and when her door was forced open, the atmosphere of her confined and dirty apartment was too awful to be described. Dummy was laid hold of by the authorities, borne off sullenly to the hospital, and was there cleaned, cared for, and fed. What they did with her household goods, we do not know, but from Dummy's bed were taken parcels of money amounting to several pounds, the proceeds of indiscriminate charity. Fourteen shillings of this were in coppers, no doubt the hoardings of her Saturday-pennies. Her only way of asking for clothes was by a fantastic display of some ragged part of her dress accompanied by various uncouth sounds. Last time I heard of her she was clean and comfortable, and seemed to have a good appetite. What became of the hoarded coins we do not know.

A couple came to the door begging; the husband led the wife affectionately by the hand, for as he explained to us, 'she had been stone-blind for years, and was able to do nothing for herself.' Our tender hearts were of course touched by such an indication of affection, and we presented the pair with coppers and cold meat. The same afternoon we met the couple going along hand-in-hand, but this time the man was blind and the woman was leading him.

It is pleasant to pass from the foregoing instances to the following *bona-fide* ways and means of making a livelihood. An old woman with a clean white cap on her head, surmounted by a curious black silk poke-bonnet, came and stood in front of our windows one day. She held in her hand a large basket, and would not go away till we had looked at her pretty things. They consisted of neat little pin-cushions, match-boxes, and pin-trays made of the pith from rushes, and adorned with strips of coloured paper. A superior sort had gold paper on them instead of red or blue, and were a few pence dearer. We could detect no fraud here; so we bought several, marvelling much at the neat fingers which could make such very tasteful gimcracks from such poor materials. The old woman told us that these articles were made by two respectable old ladies who were reduced by poverty to do something for themselves, and that they employed her to sell for them. Nothing could exceed the delicacy and neatness of the work. There was not a single break in the smooth white pith, and it is well known that it requires great nicety to extract this substance from an ordinary rush without breaking it. A friend tells us that she has had two match-boxes formed of pith which look pretty after twenty years' use.

We noticed on the street one day a large crowd of dirty little urchins, seemingly attracted by a man in ragged clothing, who held in his hand an immense lot of long slender sticks, at the end of which there fluttered scraps of red, blue, yellow, and green paper. Stepping forward to inspect these articles, we found that they were small flags, constructed of bits of stick and odds and ends of paper-cuttings; they were a halfpenny each, and delighted the little mob immensely. After the lapse of two hours, the man had sold nearly all his wares, and the street was covered by a merry throng of small children, each waving a tiny paper flag. Here, by the outlay of a little time

and trouble, and by the aid of a few bits of cast-away wall-papers, a grown man was actually making a living, though certainly not a large one.

LOST AND FOUND.

ON various occasions in this *Journal*, cases have been given of curious losses and subsequent recoveries of rings and other articles. The following additional examples have been kindly placed at our disposal by correspondents in various parts of the globe.

Some little time ago, Mr J. Cordy Jeaffreson, the well-known author of several capital books, received from his brother, a surgeon residing in Framlingham, Suffolk, a note informing him that a hamper was on its way to him. Just before closing the letter, the writer discovered that he had lost a diamond ring, and deeming it probable that it had dropped off his hand into the hamper while packing it, he added a postscript begging that the straw might be well searched. In due time the hamper arrived in London, was opened by Mr Jeaffreson and thoroughly examined; but no trace of the ring could be found. A little later, a clerk from the Great Eastern Railway Station called on Mr Jeaffreson, asked him if he had received a hamper on such a day, if there was anything missing which he had hoped to find; and on receiving answers, asked him to describe the missing property. That done, the clerk handed the ring over. It appeared that the hamper had been put down with several other parcels on the platform at Liverpool Street, and that a porter named Parminter, on removing them, noticed a diamond ring on the ground near this particular hamper; that being convinced it was not there before, he concluded it had fallen out of the hamper, and like an honest man, took it at once to the clerk.

The *Fife Herald* of May 25, 1876, told the story of a valuable find thus: 'One morning last week, a workman at West Bridge Flour-mills, Cupar, whilst in the act of washing a quantity of Egyptian beans, had his attention directed to something sparkling at the bottom of the vessel. He at once lifted the article, which proved to be a valuable diamond ring of chaste workmanship in fine gold. There had originally been seven diamonds in the ring, but one had been lost out of the setting; otherwise the ring was uninjured. The mystery, however, is, how did it find its way there? The beans, we believe, came direct from Egypt; and of course, as some one must have lost the ring in that country, means were taken, and we believe with success, to discover the rightful owner. The far-travelled ring has returned to the East.'

In the *Scotsman* of 9th January 1878, a correspondent gives this curious instance of the loss and recovery of a ring: 'About three weeks ago, two gentlemen were out fishing on Loch Eriboll, north-west of Sutherlandshire, and one of them dropped a valuable ring into the water. Last week a fisherman on the same loch had amongst his haul a pretty large cod, and inside it was found the identical ring safe and sound. The fisherman was handed a pound-note on his returning the ring to the owner.'

'Those persons who have seen the Lord Mayor of London,' says the *World*, 'not merely in his most festive garb, but in semi-state, will not have failed to notice that the chief magistrate wears at such times a large oval ornament hung round his neck by a piece of Garter-blue ribbon. This ornament is composed of large diamonds. It is of great value, and has a history extending over something like eight hundred years—the age of the corporation. Shortly after Lord Mayor Cotton came into office, one of the enormous brilliants of the "jewel"—for that is its proper appellation—was missed. It had either fallen out or been stolen, and search was made for it high and low. The Mansion House was presumably closely looked over, but unsuccessfully; and a West End jeweller was called in to provide a substitute for the lost diamond, the actual worth of which was very great, while its historical value might hardly be appraised. One day, however, as the Lord Mayor was reading in one of the drawing-rooms at the Mansion House, a gleam of sunshine fell upon something lying near a couch, and when Mr Cotton went to look, he found that that something was the missing diamond, which now gleams as brightly as ever in its old setting-place.'

Fifty years ago or thereabouts, Admiral X— was in command of one of His Majesty's ships on the Mediterranean station. He always wore an antique ring of rare workmanship and very great value; it was curiously engraved with Arabic or Egyptian characters (a ring that nobody could possibly mistake). One day when on deck, in giving some orders he lifted his hand, and his ring slipped off his finger and fell overboard. Of course he concluded that he had seen the last of his favourite ring; but a few weeks afterwards, he received a letter from a friend, Captain C—, who was stationed at Gibraltar, and who had heard of his loss, telling him he had found the ring in the following singular manner. He was buying some fish, when on the vender's finger he saw the ring, which he at once recognised (as I said before, it was one it was impossible to mistake). He inquired of the woman how she got it; when she directly answered: 'Sir, it is very odd, and perhaps you will hardly believe me, but I found it inside a fish I was cleaning.' I need scarcely add that Captain C— bought the ring, and returned it to his old friend, who, you may be sure, was more careful of it after this adventure, having a double value for it.

In the year 1857, Mr and Mrs C— of L— were going from a favourite watering-place in North Devon to a village on the coast near, in their little pleasure-boat. The weather becoming very rough, they had some difficulty in managing their tiny craft, and Mr C— had to assist the men and lend a hand. He was wearing a valuable diamond ring (a memorial ring to Lord R—, once a most popular and justly esteemed personage in Devon), and having a great regard for his ring, both on account of its worth and for his old friend's sake, he took it off and gave it to his wife to take care of. She put it on her finger, but becoming very much alarmed at the weather, quite forgot all about it till she was safely landed on L— beach. She then had time to remember it, but to her dismay it was gone. Every search

was made, and continued for many days, but unavailingly. Nothing more was seen of it until 1870. During that summer, some children of a family lodging in the village, while amusing themselves on the beach, picked up the ring, which although it had been either in the sea or among the rocks for thirteen years, was perfectly uninjured, looking as bright and fresh as if it had only just been dropped. Strange to say the lady who had lost it was (accidentally) almost the first person to whom it was shewn.

Some years since, Miss G—, when taking a walk with a friend on the shore at S—, lost her watch. She had looked at it only about twenty minutes before she missed it, and knowing exactly the place where she had taken it out, she and her companion returned along the beach to look for it. When they were within a short distance of the spot, they saw a fisherman coming towards them, and also saw him stoop down, and apparently pick up something, which they very naturally concluded was the watch. As he came near, they recognised him as J—, an idle fellow of very indifferent character. They of course asked him, if he had found the watch; but he said no, and what he had picked up was the lady's glove. This was true, as Miss G— had, while collecting seaweed, touched something which made her glove smell so disagreeably, that she had thrown it away. However, the young ladies felt certain J— had got the watch, and he was taken before the magistrates; but as there was no evidence against him, he was discharged with a caution. Not very long after this, Miss G— married, and went away from S—, not returning there for four years, when she came back, on a visit to some friends. One day while standing on the beach with them and her husband, she said: 'It was exactly here I lost my watch, four years ago.' As she spoke, she looked down, and there on the shingle lay the watch. It was quite black, and of course spoilt; but there was the watch, with her initials, C. G., still perfectly legible on it. So poor J— was at least innocent of that charge.

Travelling in the province of Ontario with samples of goods some years ago, in the month of August, I arrived at the village of Ulsome, three hundred and thirty miles from Montreal, my home; and having unpacked my sample cases and gone to the dining-room for dinner, I missed a valuable ring, usually worn on my left hand, and which I remembered distinctly having seen on my finger that day. After having searched the wash-room, and made full inquiry of the landlord of the hotel and servants, I transacted my business, and left for L—, my next stopping-place. Months passed, and I had given up all hopes of getting my ring. In the following February, men were carting away from the cellar of our warehouse in Montreal a lot of rubbish and dirt, when a lad observing a kid mitten amongst the rubbish, and taking it up and putting it on, saying to himself, 'It looks warm and comfortable,' felt a hard substance, which proved to be a ring. On shewing it to the young men in the warehouse, one of them recognised it as being the one I had worn and lost. Query, How came the ring there? The solution came to me slowly. Among my 'samples' in the previous summer were mittens,

fastened to a sample card by an elastic cord; and on lifting out the cards, the ring, being loose on my finger, had dropped off, and fallen into the open cuff of the mitten. Months after, in preparing my samples for another trip, this particular mitten (the stock being all sold) was thrown out, and carelessly swept into the cellar. Need I say how thankful I was to get my old friend back, and that since I have always worn a guard for it.

The island of Galveston, which lies on the north side of the Gulf of Mexico, is about thirty miles long, and is possessed of a beautiful beach, the whole extent of the gulf-shore sloping very gently into the water. It is a great resort for bathing, and for driving on the sandy beach. The bathers enjoy their sport at night. A few years ago, a lady, Mrs L'E—, while enjoying her ocean bath, and whilst fronting one of the coming waves, received a mouthful of the briny liquid, and in relieving herself thereof, unfortunately lost her set of false teeth, in water about three feet deep, and probably a hundred yards from the dry beach. The matter was talked of a good deal, and became generally known; but no publication was made of the fact, and the teeth were given up as lost for ever. Not so, however; for some weeks afterwards a party driving along the shingle discovered something bright, and on stepping out, picked up the missing teeth, which were restored to the lady as good as ever, the polish given to them by the scouring of the sand far exceeding the dentist's art!

When Mr and Mrs G— were spending their honeymoon at L—, in Lancashire, Mrs G—, one day when sitting by the seaside (in taking off her glove) dropped her wedding-ring; they looked for it immediately, but it could not be found. Twelve years later, several after this lady's death, Mr G— was sitting in the same place with his second wife, when remembering the ring, he told her the story of its loss. As he was speaking, he put the end of his stick into a hole, adding: 'She always said it had gone in here;' when extraordinary and almost impossible as it may appear, he drew the ring out on the point of the stick.

[It will give us pleasure to receive from correspondents further guaranteed instances of curious losses and recoveries.]

TELEGRAPH PROGRESS IN JAPAN.

By the last mail we learn that the Japanese government, on the occasion of the opening of a new central telegraph office at Tôkiô, has undertaken the task of conducting hereafter the foreign telegraph business of that country. Up till that time the business arising between Japan and other countries had been conducted at an office of the (Danish) Great Northern Telegraph Company at Yokohama; but Japan has now for itself entered into the St Petersburg Convention, and henceforth takes its place amongst the recognised telegraph administrations of the day. It is less than eight years since the first telegraph in Japan was erected, and there are now nearly six thousand miles of wire in operation. And what is more remarkable, probably, is that the whole of the Morse instruments in the new head office, as well

as the 'test-box,' and a 'chronofer' or time transmitter, by which the correct time is transmitted daily to the one hundred and twenty-five offices in Japan, are of native make. In fact it is stated that wire is the only part of the telegraph system which is now imported, and it is expected that even the wire may soon be manufactured. When the new office at Tôkiô was thrown open to public inspection before being used for business, the building was inconveniently crowded by multitudes of the lower orders of Japanese, who seemed 'unwearied in displaying their open-mouthed enjoyment and surprise at the novel spectacle presented to them,' and to look with delighted awe on the small and simple-looking instruments which they knew would in some mysterious way convey a message instantaneously to places far distant. The official opening of the new office was witnessed by Sir Henry Parkes, K.C.B., British Minister at Japan; and amongst others by Mr Edward Gilbert, the English Chief-Superintendent, to whom the development of telegraphy in Japan owes so much.

ON A SHEET OF BLANK PAPER.

O VIRGIN page, untouched, unstained,
Without a line, without a blot,
Thou cream-laid blank-faced mystery
Of untold thoughts, of unsung songs;
Who can foresee thy end, thy lot,
Who tell thy future history?

Perchance thou art reserved to bear
The record of a lofty mind,
Whose echo shall defy Time's wave;
Or in the rubbish basket near
Some cruel hand may bid thee find
Oblivion, and a wicker grave.

Or shall, upon thy vacant face,
Some poet write a stirring ode,
Some wondrous lay, some graceful sonnet?
Or shall Miss Jones's fingers trace
Some lines to Madame à la Mode
About the colour of her bonnet?

Thou mayst some doctor's mandate bear
For horrid drugs or an emetic;
Or serve to write an IOU;
Some love-sick swain to Dulcinea,
In halting doggerel most pathetic,
May send thee as a *billet-doux*.

Or on thee, haply, shall be wrought
Some Picture, to for aye remain,
A masterpiece of tint and line?
Or shall the baser pen and thought
Of Thomas, or of Sarah Jane,
Degrade thee to a valentine?

O empty blank! that only craves
A touch, a word, in paint or rhyme;
Thou silent monument of shame
On cowards, idlers, Fashion's slaves,
On brains that have no thoughts sublime,
On hands that cannot give thee fame.

What ill destroyed, what good abused!
So ready thou to cheer or pain,
So prompt for blessing or for curse—
And here, half-conscious, as I mused,
I took the paper up again,
And scribbled off this idle verse!

T. P.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.